



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Secretary
Press Service



LBW

4-6-26

MEMORANDUM TO Mr. Cheesman, Biological Survey

I am sending you 20 copies of the news item entitled
"FUR TERMS EXPLAINED"
which we mailed today. It was distributed as checked below:

Department officials and others who receive
copies of all release to the press.

Farm Papers.

Farm Editions of Daily Papers.

:Full List.

Daily Newspapers :One in a city--all cities

:One in a city--in all cities having more
than one daily.

:Full List.

Sunday Editions of dailies :One in a city.

Washington Correspondents and free lance writers.
College Editors.

Trade Papers as follows.

...Fur Papers

Please forward a copy of this item to the office in your bureau
directly interested.

If additional copies of any article originating in your bureau
are desired please attach request for them to the manuscript when it
is approved in your office. If you are unable to anticipate such a
need, please request the desired number of copies immediately upon
receipt of this memorandum.

Yours very truly,
C. E. GAPEN,
Chief of
Press Service.



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Release - Immediate.

April 6, 1926.

FUR TERMS EXPLAINED

On account of confusion among many trappers, furriers, and wardens as to the meaning of the terms "prime" and "unprime" and "legal" and "illegal" when applied to furs, the Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture makes the following explanation of these terms:

Primeness is determined by examining the skin side, which, if the pelt is fresh, should be fairly white or cream colored and show some "life" when handled. Black or blue spots in the skin indicate that it is unprime. Skins turn yellow with age and lose their firmness. The outside of a prime fur should be perfectly and evenly furred all over, both on the back and on the belly, with the fur reasonably long, lustrous, and silky. There should be no rubbed spots or defects. A trapper can not tell whether a pelt is prime before he skins the animal, however, for the outside appearance alone is not conclusive evidence in the matter.

"Legal" and "illegal," on the other hand, relate specifically to furs taken in open or close seasons--purely a question of date. If a fur-bearing animal is trapped after the opening of the season, then it is taken legally, and the skin is termed legal, although on examination it may be unprime. An animal caught during the close season, on the other hand, regardless of the condition of the pelt, is taken illegally. A frequent defect in the fur laws of the various States is that the open season is so long as to permit trapping before the pelts are prime in fall and after breeding is in progress in spring. The only application, then, that "unprime" could have to the law would be to unprime skins taken in close season. These, as well as all others taken in close season, would be illegal skins.

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